



School Nutrition-Food Service Environment Physical Activity Nutrition Education

Action For Healthy Kids, Arizona State Team Arizona Healthy School Environment Model Policy

Introduction

- Approximately 13% of school-age children are obese, and 15% are overweight. (2001 Surgeon General's Report)
- Between 56 – 85% of school age children consume soda everyday. (J Am Diet Assoc. 2003)
- 51% of school-age children consume less than one serving of fruits and vegetables a day. (J Am Diet Assoc. 2003)
- 84% of school-age children consume too much fat. (J Am Diet Assoc. 2003)
- Among children of varying ages, 8 to 45% (depending on geographic region) of newly diagnosed cases of childhood diabetes are Type 2, non-insulin dependent associated with obesity. (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000)
- Most high school students take only one year of physical education between grades 9 and 12 and less than a third of high school students attend physical education classes daily (NASPE 2001). One out of four children do not attend any school physical education classes (CDC 1999-2000).

The research listed above presents an alarming reality that today's schools, communities, and families are faced with addressing. Recognizing the value of school meals and good nutrition, the Arizona State Team of the Action For Healthy Kids Coalition urges school educators, administrators and school board officials to create healthy school environments through adopting sound nutrition-food service environment policies. This Arizona "model" nutrition policy has been developed to protect the health of Arizona's school children so they may achieve their full academic potential.

The school nutrition-food service environment is one of the three initiatives identified by Action For Healthy Kids for providing a school environment that models health promotion and takes action to combat the rising health risks in children. The normal school day is for most children nearly one-half of their non-sleep time day. The school nutrition-food service environment is an important and critical partner with physical activity and nutrition education in improving children's health.

All Arizona public, private and charter schools should endeavor to voluntarily adopt the policy in part or as a whole, recognizing that the maximum benefit will be achieved by adopting the policy in whole.

Policy Terms and Definitions

Action For Healthy Kids Coalition - (AFHK) is a nationwide initiative dedicated to improving the health and educational performance of children through better nutrition and physical activity in schools. This effort represents a response to our nation's epidemic of overweight, sedentary, and undernourished children and adolescents. AFHK is composed of 51 State Teams and a national coordinating and resource group. AFHK fosters sharing and collaboration among diverse stakeholders to encourage and facilitate meaningful change in schools. Guidance and direction is provided by more than 35 national organizations and government agencies representing education, health, physical activity and nutrition.
<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/index.htm>

Center For Disease Control and Prevention – (CDC) is recognized as the lead federal agency for protecting the health and safety of people - at home and abroad, providing credible information to enhance health decisions, and promoting health through strong partnerships.
<http://www.cdc.gov/default.htm>

Overweight - a state in which weight exceeds a standard based on height; having a body mass index of 25-29.9 or greater.

Obesity - The CDC uses growth charts BMI-for-age to assess overweight in children (2-20 years old). 85th percentile to < 95 percentile is considered at risk for overweight and a BMI-for-age of 95th percentile or greater is considered overweight

Dietary Guidelines for Americans – dietary recommendations for healthy Americans age 2 years and over about food choices that promote health specifically with respect to prevention or delay of chronic diseases.

Physical Activity - CDC defines physical activity as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in an expenditure of energy.

National School Lunch Program – (NSLP) is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential childcare institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. The program was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946.

American School Food Service Association – (ASFSA) has been advancing the availability, quality and acceptance of school nutrition programs as an integral part of education since 1946. The Association strives to see that all children have access to healthful school meals and nutrition education. The primary activities of the association are 1) providing education and training, 2) setting standards through certification and credentialing, 3) gathering and transmitting regulatory, legislative, industry, nutritional and other types of information related to school nutrition, and 4) representing the nutritional interests of all children. <http://www.asfsa.org/>

Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points – (HACCP) involves seven principles in order to identify, analyze, prevent and or control any biological, chemical, or physical hazard. HACCP was developed and is maintained as part of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~comm/haccpov.html>

Normal School Day – Time period spanning from the first bell of the day that begins the first class period to the last bell of the day ending the final class period. For schools who have multiple schedules in place, the school day for each schedule ends 7 hours after the first bell indicating the start of the initial class of the first session.

Purpose and Goals

All students shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make nutritious and enjoyable food choices for a lifetime. In addition, all school staff are encouraged to model healthy eating behavior as a valuable part of daily life. School leaders shall prepare, adopt, and implement a comprehensive plan to encourage healthy eating that includes:

- A food service program that employs well-prepared staff who efficiently serve appealing choices of nutritious foods;
- Pleasant eating areas for students and staff with adequate time for unhurried eating;
- An overall school environment that encourages students to make healthy food choices;
- Opportunities and encouragement for staff to model healthy eating habits;
- Services to ensure that students and staff with nutrition-related health problems are referred to appropriate services for counseling or medical treatment; and
- Strategies to involve family members in program development and implementation.

The school nutrition program shall make effective use of school and community resources and equitably serve the needs and interests of all students and staff, taking into consideration differences in cultural norms.

I. The Food Service Operation

A. Financial Management

1. It is acknowledged that the feeding of children is primarily a family responsibility. To supplement their efforts, every school shall operate a food service program to ensure that all students have affordable access to the varied and nutritious foods they need to stay healthy and learn well.
2. **The food service program shall aim to be financially self-supporting.** However, the program is essential educational and support activity and budget neutrality or profit generation must not take precedence over the nutritional needs of the students. If subsidy of the food service fund is needed, it should not be from the sale of foods that have minimal nutritional value and/or compete nutritionally with program meals.

B. Program Requirements

1. **During each school day the food service program shall offer breakfast and lunch under the nutritional guidelines of the USDA's National School Lunch and Breakfast Program.** Additionally, the food service program shall offer snacks based on the nutrient guidelines in the USDA's After School At-Risk Snack Program to those students in after-school education or enrichment programs. Schools are strongly encouraged to implement breakfast in the classroom at appropriate sites. Each school shall encourage all students to participate in these meal opportunities. In particular, the school shall make efforts to ensure that families are aware of need-based programs for free or reduced-price meals and that eligible families are encouraged to apply. The program shall maintain the confidentiality of students and families applying for or receiving free or reduced-price meals.
2. **The school food service program shall operate in accordance with the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1996 as amended and applicable laws and regulations of the state of Arizona.** Schools shall offer varied and nutritious food choices that are consistent with the federal government's Dietary Guidelines for Americans. For the purpose of this policy, *"Dietary Guidelines for Americans"* refers to the current set of recommendations of the federal government that are designed to help people choose diets that will meet nutrient requirements, promote health, support active lives, and reduce chronic disease risks. Menus should be planned with input from students, family members, and other school personnel and should take into account students' cultural norms and preferences. Food pricing strategies shall be designed to encourage students to purchase nutritious items. Procedures shall be in place for providing to families, on request, information about the ingredients and nutritional value of the foods served.
3. **The school food service program shall monitor the nutrient breakdown of their menus.** Regardless of menu planning format of nutrient or food based, schools shall analyze the menus offered to students using nutrient analysis software to ensure that USDA guidelines are being met.
4. **The school food service program shall have in place a procedure for handling leftover food production.** Staff shall cooperate with efforts in the community to recover wholesome excess food for distribution to people in need.

C. Staffing

1. **Each district/school shall employ a food service director, who is properly qualified, certified and/or credentialed according to current professional standards, to administer the school food service program and satisfy reporting requirements.** The American School Food Service Association has established certification and credentialing standards available at <http://www.asfsa.org/continuinged/>. The American Dietetic Association (ADA) has established certification and credentialing standards available at www.eatright.org. Schools should utilize ASFSA and ADA recommendations for food service staffing and qualifications to appropriately staff their food service departments.

2. Food service directors are strongly encouraged to implement the Arizona Department of Education training program, or equivalent, for all food service personnel. *The Arizona Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs is defined as a training initiative for Food Services Directors so that they possess the necessary skills and resources to effectively train food service personnel.*
3. Dining room supervisory staff (teachers, aids, janitorial staff, etc.) shall receive appropriate training in how to maintain safe, orderly, and pleasant eating environments.
4. Food service directors and staff are encouraged to inform and collaborate with classroom teachers about the school nutrition-food service environment and nutrition education.

D. Adequate Eating Space and Time and Appropriate Use of Food

1. **Students and staff shall have adequate space to eat meals in pleasant surroundings and shall have adequate time to eat, relax, and socialize.** Safe drinking water and convenient access to facilities for hand washing and oral hygiene must be available during all meal periods.
2. **Rewards and incentives for academic performance should be given careful consideration as to the messages they send to students receiving them.** If food is included in recognition of academic performance, it should be used in the general celebration of the achievement not as the reward.
3. **Food shall not be withheld from students as punishment.**

E. Food Safety

1. Schools should encourage classes to order foods for classroom parties from the school's food service program or sources providing food in compliance with the Arizona Food Code 2000 to ensure compliance with food safety and sanitation regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCAP) plans and guidelines must be implemented to prevent food illness in schools.
2. All food service equipment and facilities must meet applicable local and state standards concerning health; safe food preparation; handling, and storage; drinking water; sanitation; and workplace safety.
3. All food service personnel shall have adequate pre-service training and must hold a State issued or equivalent training certificate. *All food service workers in establishments handling open food must obtain a food handler's card or applicable requirements for each county following the guidelines of the Arizona Department of Health Services.*

II. Nutrition Education

A. Instructional Program Design

1. Nutrition education topics shall be integrated within the sequential, comprehensive health education program taught at every grade level, pre-kindergarten through twelfth. The nutrition education program shall focus on students' eating behaviors be based on theories and methods proven effective by published research, and be consistent with the state's/district's health education standards/guidelines/framework. Nutrition education shall be designed to help students learn:
 - a. Nutritional knowledge, including but not limited to the benefits of healthy eating, essential nutrients, nutritional deficiencies, principles of healthy weight management, the use and misuse of dietary supplements and safe food preparations, handling and storage;
 - b. Nutrition-related skills, including but not limited to planning a healthy meal, understanding and using food labels, and critically evaluating nutrition information, misinformation, and commercial food advertising; and
 - c. How to assess one's personal eating habits, set goals for improvement, and achieve those goals.
2. Nutrition education instructional activities shall stress the appealing aspects of healthy eating and be participatory, developmentally appropriate, and enjoyable. The program shall engage families as partners in their children's education.
3. The school health council shall assess all nutrition education curricula and materials for accuracy, completeness, balance, and consistency with the state's/district's educational goals and standards. Materials developed by food marketing boards or food corporations shall be examined for inappropriate commercial messages.

B. Staff Qualifications

1. Staff responsible for nutrition education shall be adequately prepared and regularly participate in professional development activities to effectively deliver the nutrition education program as planned. Preparation and professional development activities shall provide basic knowledge of nutrition, combined with skill practice in program-specific activities and instructional techniques and strategies designed to promote healthy eating habits.

C. Educational Reinforcement

1. School instructional staff shall collaborate with agencies and groups conducting nutrition education in the community to send consistent messages to students and their families. Guest speakers invited to address students shall receive appropriate orientation to the relevant policies of the school/district.

2. School staff are encouraged to cooperate with other agencies and community groups to provide opportunities for student volunteer work related to nutrition, such as assisting with food recovery efforts and preparing nutritious meals for house-bound people. School officials should disseminate information to parents, students, and staff about community programs that offer nutrition assistance to families.

D. Staff As Role Models.

1. School staffs are encouraged to model healthy eating behaviors. Schools should offer wellness programs that include personalized instruction about healthy eating and physical activity.

E. Coordination of Programs

1. **The food service program shall be closely coordinated with nutrition instruction.** The school cafeteria shall serve as a laboratory to allow students to apply critical thinking skills taught in the classroom. Food service staff shall also work closely with those responsible for other components of the school health program to achieve common goals. The Comprehensive Health Education Standards for Arizona Schools should be implemented throughout the entire school environment. These standards can be viewed at <http://www.ade.az.gov/>
2. **School culinary, vocational tech, art programs, etc. shall provide a consistent learning experience that reinforces the objectives of the school food service program and will comply with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans where appropriate.**
3. **Schools are encouraged to offer meals during breaks in the school calendar and to coordinate with other agencies and community groups to operate, or assist with operating, a summer food service program for children and adolescents who are eligible for federal program support.** A child's need for nutrients does not end when school does.

F. Nutrition-Related Health Problems and Modified Diets

1. **School counselors and school health services staff shall consistently promote healthy eating to students and other staff.** These professionals shall be prepared to recognize conditions such as obesity, eating disorders, and other nutrition-related health problems among students and staff and be able to refer them to appropriate services.
2. The school food service program will comply with USDA's disability requirements for modified diets. The school food service program is strongly encouraged to meet ethnic dietary requests as recommended by USDA.

III. Food Choices at School and a Healthy School Environment

A. The School Environment

1. Recess

- a. **Careful consideration of the school lunch environment shall be taken into account when scheduling recess.** The importance of physical activity for children of all ages and supervised playtime for younger children shall be duly acknowledged. *Center for Disease Control defines physical activity as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in an expenditure of energy.* It is encouraged that schools provide recess before lunch or at a different time than lunch at all appropriate sites. The Comprehensive Health Education Standards specifically detail and address Physical Activity Standards for Arizona Schools. These standards can be viewed at <http://www.ade.az.gov/>. For further standards on physical activity, please see Guidelines for Physical Activity section.

2. Commercial Advertising

- a. Partnerships between schools and businesses are encouraged, and business sponsorship of educational activities and materials shall be duly acknowledged. However, such partnerships shall be designed to meet identified educational needs and healthy school environment goals and shall be evaluated for educational effectiveness by the school/district on an ongoing basis.
- b. **Advertising messages should be consistent with and reinforce the objectives of the educational and nutrition environment goals of the school.** Advertising of foods or beverages in the areas accessible to students during meal times must be consistent with established nutrition environment standards.

B. Nutritious Food Choices

1. **Foods of good nutritional content including fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, and low-fat grain products, shall be available wherever and whenever food is sold or otherwise offered at school during the normal school day.** Schools shall take efforts to encourage students to make nutritious food choices. (See attached guidelines).
2. **Food and beverages sold or served on school grounds or at school-sponsored events during the normal school day shall meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and other nutrition standard guidelines as set forth by the Arizona Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs.** This includes:
 - a. a la carte offerings in the food service program;
 - b. food and beverage choices in vending machines, snack bars, meal-period kiosks, and school stores;
 - c. food and beverages sold as part of school-sponsored fundraising activities; and
 - d. refreshments served at student parties, celebrations, and meetings.

3. **Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value as defined by 7 CFR 210.11(2) are prohibited from being served or sold anywhere a reimbursable meal is served, sold, and/or eaten.** Foods of minimal nutritional value as defined by USDA include carbonated beverages, water ices, chewing gum, hard candies, jellies and gums, marshmallow candies, fondant, licorice, spun candy, and candy coated popcorn.
 - a. Non-Creditable Food Items- may be served during the lunch period, as well as contribute to the nutritional content of the menu. However, these foods do not count towards USDA meal patterns. Schools are encouraged to limit availability of these food items to students.
 - b. Creditable- food item determined by USDA to have nutritional value and acceptable as a component of a complete meal. Schools are encouraged to serve a variety of credible food items.

C. Food Sales

1. **At the discretion of the Food Service Director, the management of foods sales on school grounds shall be under the management of the school food service program, (except foods sold as part of a fundraising activity).** If food and beverages are sold from vending machines or school stores during school hours and are not under the management of the school's food service programs, the nutrition requirements of USDA's School Lunch Program and the nutrition environment requirements set forth in this policy must still be met.
2. Only student organizations and legally constituted, nonsectarian, nonpartisan organizations approved by a designated school official are permitted to engage in fundraising on school grounds during the school day. These organizations are encouraged to raise funds through the sale of items other than food. Foods sold for fundraising purposes are prohibited during meal services and until 30 minutes after the last meal is served during the school day. Foods sold for fundraising purposes during the school day shall be monitored by the food service director to ensure compliance with the nutritional standards established by the USDA for school food service programs, as well as nutrition standards set forth by the Arizona Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs. Organization raising funds by selling foods must schedule and authorize the fundraiser with the food service director prior to the event.
3. Foods and beverages that have as the first ingredient: sugar, corn syrup, shortening, lard, or similar, may not be sold to students on school grounds during the normal school day.

IV. Physical Activity and a Healthy School Environment

A. Recommendations for Physical Activity

1. Physical education courses should be the environment in which students learn, practice and are assessed on developmentally appropriate motor skills, social skills, and knowledge.

2. Physical activity involves bodily movement that results in an expenditure of energy of at least a moderate intensity level and for duration sufficient to provide a significant health benefit for students.
3. Children should accumulate at least 60 minutes of physical activity on all or most days of the week. This can be accomplished through several bouts of physical activity lasting 15 minutes or more each day.
4. Extended periods of inactivity (periods of two or more hours) are discouraged.

B. Recommendations for Physical Education for Children During the Normal School Day

1. Ensure that state-certified physical education teachers teach all physical education classes.
2. Provide an adequate amount of time for physical education classes. Schools should provide at least 150 minutes per week for elementary students and at least 225 minutes per week for middle and high school students for the entire school year.
3. Ensure that physical education classes have a teacher/student ratio comparable with those of other classes
4. Implement a sequential physical education course of study consistent with national standards for physical education and with a focus on students' development of motor skills, movement forms, and health-related fitness.
5. Ensure that students are moderately to vigorously active at least 50% of the time while participating in physical education classes.
6. Provide a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activity for all students, including those who are not athletically gifted.
7. Prohibit the use of physical activity as punishment, the withholding of participation in physical education class as punishment, or the use of physical education class time to complete assignments from other classes.

C. Encouraging Lifetime Physical Activity

1. Schools should provide daily recess periods of at least 20 minutes for all elementary school students.
2. Schools should provide physical activity breaks during classroom hours.
3. Schools shall offer after-school intramural programs and/or physical activity clubs that meet the needs and interests of all students, including those who are not athletically gifted and those with special health care needs.
4. Schools will be encouraged to provide community access to and encourage students and community members to use the school's physical activity facilities outside of the normal school day.
5. Schools should encourage parents and community members to institute programs that support physical activity, such as a walk to school program.
6. Schools should encourage after-school childcare programs to provide developmentally appropriate physical activity for participating children and reduce or eliminate the time spent in sedentary activities such as watching television or videos.

The policy will be modified based on legislation.

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1997) Guidelines for School and Community Programs to Promote Lifelong Physical Activity Among Young People. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2003) Ten Strategies for Promoting Physical Activity, Health Eating, and Tobacco-Free Lifestyle Through School Health Programs. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Corbin CB, Pangrazi RP. Guidelines for Appropriate Physical Activity for Elementary School Children: 2003 Update. A Position Statement for Council for Physical Education for Children (COPECE) of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education an association of the American Alliance for Health Physical Education and Recreation.

The policy will be modified based on legislation.

Appendix

A. Guidelines in Identifying and Selecting Foods of Good Nutritional Value

Implementation Guidelines

The Implementation Guidelines Section offers suggestions and guidance in implementing the Action For Healthy Kids School Nutrition-Food Service Model Policy. Although many factors play a role in the thoughtful and purposeful implementation of rules governing foods and beverages available during the school day, it is suggested that the guiding principle be the normal school day is the environment wherein the demonstration model is consistent with what is taught in the classroom and the national health initiatives.

- Section 1. Foods and Beverages Offered During the School Day
- Section 2. Implementation Action Plan
- Section 3. Establishing the Relationship Among the School Nutrition-Food Service Environment, Physical Activity and Nutrition Education

Section 1. Foods and Beverages Offered During the School Day

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Child Nutrition Program regulations should be used in deciding what foods and beverages will be available.

Foods and beverages offered other than the lunch or breakfast should offer replacement nutrient value to the consumer. The item should offer a good source of nutrients, be moderate in sodium, be moderate or low in fat, and be moderate in sugar that is not naturally occurring in the food and moderate in calories.

Offer a variety of beverages at a location so consumers may make a choice appropriate to their need.

Offer skim or 1% milk fat beverage selections where 2% milk fat or whole milk fat beverages are available and encourage the consumption of lower fat options.

Offer a variety of foods that can be used as replacement for part of a traditional meal or additive to a meal when additional calories and nutrients are needed because of energy expenditure.

If the offering is with the intent of being additive to the nutrient content of lunch or breakfast, the reason for the need for additive nutrients needs to be identified and decisions made based on the need(s).

Involve students in the process.

Section 2. Implementation Action Plan

Governing Board action is recommended to demonstrate the adoption is a consistent standard for the school district.

Internal organization communications should identify responsibility and accountability aspects.

School community communications should include the rationale, references and outline of changes.

A stakeholder advisory group should be created to assist district employees with the implementation.

A district position should be identified that will be responsible for inquiries and actions regarding the policy implementation.

Section 3. Establishing the Relationship Among the School Nutrition-Food Service Environment, Physical Activity and Nutrition Education

When each element of the relationship among food consumption, physical activity and nutrition education occurs, the reference to the other two elements needs to be obvious and consistently offered.

Determine incremental approaches to implementing both physical activity and physical education improvements.

Utilize Arizona Health Services Department resources for planning physical activity awareness initiatives.